

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

**ScholarWorks @ UTRGV**

---

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers -  
Newsletters

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers

---

8-1-1985

## Newsletter - 1985-08-01

E. De la Garza

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/kikadelagarzanews>



Part of the [State and Local Government Law Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers - Newsletters, UTRGV Digital Library, The University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers at ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kika de la Garza Congressional Papers - Newsletters by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact [justin.white@utrgv.edu](mailto:justin.white@utrgv.edu), [william.flores01@utrgv.edu](mailto:william.flores01@utrgv.edu).

# NEWSLETTER

99-1012

August 1, 1985

Washington DC

THE "USER FEE" EPIDEMIC. Every now and then you'll see a legislative bill in the Congress receive substantial treatment by a Subcommittee and then be recommended for full Committee approval all on the same day the bill was introduced. And that is just what happened to HR 3034. It was introduced on July 18 and by the end of the day it had gone through the Subcommittee on Trade and then sped upwards to the full Committee on Ways and Means which finished its work on the bill July 24.

This bill would set a schedule of user fees to be collected by the U S Customs Service to cover the costs of processing incoming vessels, trucks, trains, private yachts and boats, private aircraft--and for the processing of passengers entering the U S by commercial transport-for-hire through ports of entry.

This bill is a softened version of the proposal by the Administration's Treasury Department officials to establish a comprehensive fee schedule which would apply not only to the transport vehicle (commercial or private) but to the actual articles entering the U S through Customs Service ports of entry. The Administration wants to raise some revenue to offset budget deficits and this comprehensive approach was touted as being able to provide some \$473 million in fiscal year 1986 and \$513 million by FY 1988.

But this comprehensive approach was never really a big winner with many of us in the Congress. So my House colleague, Rep Sam Gibbons who is Chairman of the Trade Subcommittee of the Committee on Ways and Means, introduced HR 3034 as a way of raising a little revenue by setting user fees ONLY ON THE MEANS OF CONVEYANCE AND NOT THE

ARTICLES BEING TRANSPORTED. The bill would set the following fees:

- o For commercial vessels over 100 tons--\$425;
- o For trucks and for trains (per car)--\$5;
- o For private yachts, boats and general aviation--\$25 per year; and
- o For passengers (by train, air and vessel) coming from Mexico, Canada, or other approved contiguous territories and islands--\$1 per passenger, and from non-contiguous countries--\$5 per passenger. The bill's provisions in this regard would apply to Amtrak's passenger service.

This user fee schedule under HR 3034 would be expected to raise about \$173 million annually, to be returned to the general account of the U S Treasury Department.



**—KIKI DE LA GARZA, 15TH DISTRICT, TEXAS—**

The fees assessed would cover costs associated with Customs Service "processing" of incoming people, vessels, trucks, trains, boats and aircraft as the Customs Service does not at present have such authority.

To minimize administrative costs in the collection of fees on passenger carriers, the bill directs commercial carriers to collect the fees from passengers at the time the travel ticket is purchased and to remit the money to the Treasury Department on a quarterly basis.

User fees as revenue generators have never been high on many peoples' list of favored deficit reduction methods. The government requires that citizens and certain businesses comply with laws regarding international commerce and travel. These rules of commerce are designed to protect the entire U S population from the dangers of imported pests, diseases, contraband goods and the like. Import houses and brokerage firms comply with these laws not because they want to--but because for the public good they have to do so.

Some people are irked philosophically that the Administration wants to assess a fee on the very businesses that have no choice but to comply with the law. As one witness last week before the Ways and Means Committee put it, "This is like the IRS charging you a fee to process your income tax return."

Now I am working strenuously with the Democratic Leadership in the House to effect some responsible budget savings this year--but many in Congress are beginning to have strong reservations about raising money through the assessment of fees on businesses for the privilege of being regulated in the name of the public good.

# # # # #

APPLYING FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF U S CITIZENSHIP. Of the 4,892 applications received in the Harlingen Immigration & Naturalization Service office for citizenship, only 16 people were turned away. In the San Antonio INS office, 5,544 applications were received and 37 were denied. The law requires that each applicant show command of the English language and a knowledge of U S history and government--and many public schools have night classes to instruct citizenship applicants.

I mention this because recently it came to my attention that some have alleged the INS in our area was turning down huge numbers of applicants and this is not true.

# # # # #

NEXT STOP ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS. Any of our friends from South Texas who have come to my Washington office while visiting the city know that I have an office with a South Texas border flare. We begin with red carpet at the entrance, U.S. and Texas flags by the door, and inside--a mounted deer head, mounted javelina and Pronghorn antelope, and huge 4-foot Mexican colored paper flowers with a Texas-sized stuffed honey bee! Colorful is an understatement of sorts! Even other Members of Congress will stick their heads in my door having heard about "Kiki's office."

Well, as my Committee is currently wrestling with the long term USDA farm program, we have lots of visitors from all over America in the halls this week. Three people (unknown to me) were coming up the hallway looking for a room and they happened to glance through my door. One of them said, "What's this--the Chinese Embassy?" Well, not quite the exact global location, but I'm glad the decorating caught their eyes because we are South Texas' Embassy to the world--we are mighty proud to welcome all visitors.

# # # # #

NATIONAL "HOT DOG" MONTH. We had a great party and I made my now famous "guacamole hot dog." It's a nice hot dog on a warm bun with guacamole on each side instead of mustard or mayonnaise--a little salsa on the top with shredded lettuce and cheddar cheese and a dab of sour cream. And a hearty "buen appetito."

# # # # #

VISITORS FROM SOUTH TEXAS. Mr and Mrs James A McAllen of Linn; Rev and Mrs Michael Beaght & family of Alice; Judge & Mrs Menton Murray Jr & Trey, Bill and Margaret Hubbard & Blake--all of Harlingen; Joan and Jesse Rodriguez, Mr and Mrs Stacy Amann and children--all of McAllen; Mr and Mrs John E Pawlik of Mission; G.G. Garcia of Vienna, Virginia (formerly of Mercedes); Mr and Mrs Alton Moore and Dennis of Pharr; Mary and Sara Webster of Pleasanton; Dr and Mrs Roberto S Margo and family of Rio Grande City; Joe Vasquez of Weslaco; Jack Nelson of Santa Rosa.